

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated July 2, 2003, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration based on the above claim amendment and the following remarks. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims as presented are in condition for allowance.

Examiner Sing is thanked for the courtesies extended to Applicants' representative during the telephone interview conducted on August 8, 2003. The substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

In the Office Action mailed July 2, 2003, claims 1-23 were rejected as follows:

- claims 1-10 and 20-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Epler et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,825,867);
- claims 1-4, 11-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Eisdorfer (U.S. Patent No. 5,636,269); and
- claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eisdorfer in view of Epler et al.

To the extent any of these rejections might still be applied to claims presently pending in this application, it is respectfully traversed.

By the foregoing amendment, claims 1-13 and 15-23 have been amended. No new subject matter has been introduced. Accordingly, claims 1-23 will be pending following this amendment. Independent claims are 1, 7, 11, 15, and 20.

Independent claim 1 was rejected as being anticipated by Epler et al. and Eisdorfer. Claim 1 has been amended to include claim elements listed below, with emphases and labels (a) through (g) added, for the convenience of the Examiner:

- (a) associating a plurality of priority codes with a telephone number of the telephone line, wherein each of the plurality of priority codes is further

associated with a priority level of a plurality of priority levels, each of the plurality of priority levels is associated with a priority alert signal;

- (b) receiving a call from a calling party who dialed the telephone number while the telephone line is engaged in a first communication session between the subscriber and a third party;
- (c) receiving a priority code provided by the calling party;
- (d) determining whether the priority code provided by the calling party matches any of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number;
- (e) playing a priority alert signal associated with the priority code provided by the calling party to interfere with the first communication session if the priority code provided by the calling party matches any of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number;
- (f) executing a default action if the priority code provided by the calling party does not match any of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number; and
- (g) establishing a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.

Support for these elements can be found in, for example, paragraphs [0025] to [0027], Figures 2, 4, and 6, and the associated description of the present application.

Applicants believe that claim 1 is not anticipated or rendered obvious by any of the references of record, singly or in combination. For example, with respect to element (a), which recites subject matter similar to that originally disclosed in claim 19, "Eisdorfer fails to specifically teach that . . . each of the several priority codes represents a different priority level," as acknowledged on page 9 of the office action. With respect to the assertion that Epler et al. "teaches using multiple priority codes [telephone numbers associated with the called party] to

generate distinctive rings for indicating different levels of priorities" (see page 9 of the office action), Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner.

As emphasized in element (a) above, the plurality of priority codes recited in claim 1 are associated with a telephone number of the subscriber (the called party) and the plurality of priority codes are not telephone numbers (see, e.g., Tables 1 and 2 on pages 14 and 18, respectively, of the present application). Further, a calling party of the invention does not "selectively dial a telephone number associated with the user's telephone line as a function of the indicated urgency" (see column 6, lines 11-13 of Epler et al.). In the present invention, the calling party dials the telephone number of the subscriber, which is associated with the plurality of priority codes, and then provides one priority code that is to be matched against the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number. In other words, indication of different priority levels by the calling party of the invention is not "a function of which telephone number is used to contact the user" as disclosed in Epler et al. column 6, lines 4-5.

Accordingly, Applicants believe claim 1 as amended, and its dependent claims 2-6, have overcome each references of record.

Independent claims 7, 11, 15, and 20 have been similarly amended to include the same subject matter that Applicants believe to be allowable based on the above remarks. Accordingly, Applicants believe claims 7-23 are also in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing all of pending claims 1-23 in this case are believed to be in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions or determine that any further

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action is desirable to place this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone Applicants' undersigned representative at the number listed below.

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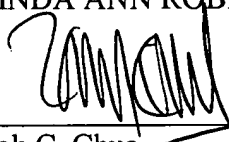
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Respectfully submitted,

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